# STAR BLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 177

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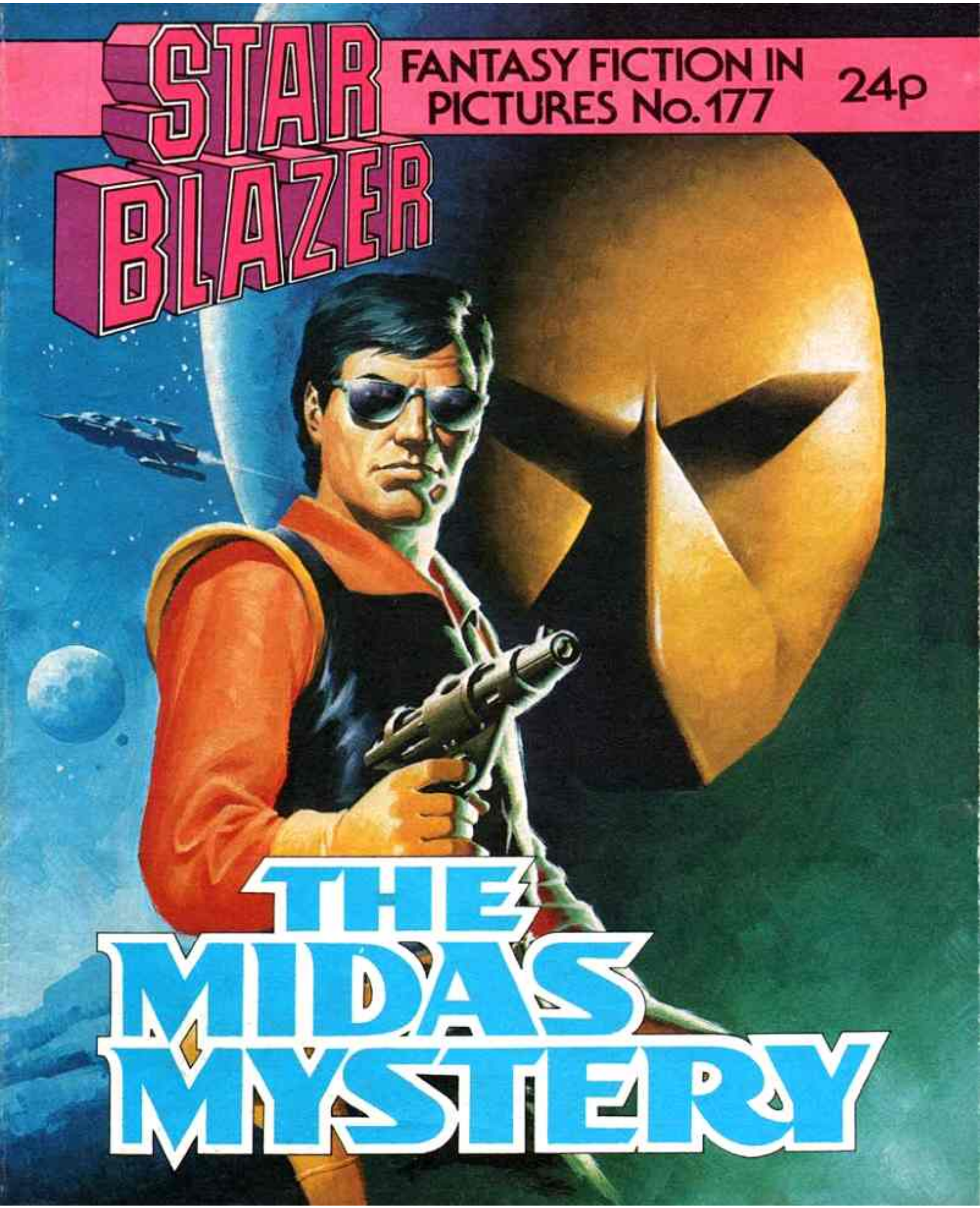

# THE MIDAS MYSTERY

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BEING A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR IS NO BIG DEAL. IN FACT, IT'S A WHOLE LOT OF HASSLE. MOST JOBS ARE BORING. EASY ENOUGH, BUT BORING. EVERY NOW AND AGAIN THE BIG PAYOFF COMES ALONG, BUT NOT OFTEN ENOUGH TO KEEP ALL THE CREDITORS AT BAY. MY DIARY TOLD ME THAT IT WAS A LONG TIME SINCE A PAYMENT 'FOR SERVICES RENDERED' HAD BEEN RECEIVED . . . LONG ENOUGH FOR MY LANDLORD TO MOAN ABOUT THE 2.5 THOU UNPAID RENT.

A SMALL DISABILITY PENSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, MY EX-EMPLOYERS, HELPED, BUT NOT MUCH. NOT THAT YOU COULD CALL THE DISABILITY SMALL . . . WITHOUT SPECIAL SHADES I COULD ONLY SEE IN INFRA-RED . . . BUT THE PENSION KEPT ME OUT OF THE DEBTORS COURT. BY THE WAY, MY NAME IS MIKAL KAYN.

THINGS WERE GOING ON. THINGS I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT.

# THE MIDAS MYSTERY

EARTH — THE HEADQUARTERS OF HARSON INDUSTRIES, SUPPLIERS OF FUEL TO THE GALAXY.

GOOD MORNING, MR HARSON. LOVELY DAY ISN'T IT?
IT CERTAINLY IS, MIKKI!

SLEY HARSON, MULTI MILLIONAIRE COMPANY DIRECTOR, TOOK THE ELEVATOR UP TO HIS OFFICE ON THE FIFTIETH FLOOR.

OH, MR HARSON! I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TODAY. I'LL HAVE TO REARRANGE MY WORK SCHEDULE.

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, MISS KOOVA. AS A MATTER OF FACT . . .
DETONATE

YOU'RE FIRED!
AT 8.15 A MEDIUM SIZED PLASMACHARGE TURNED THE HARSON BUILDING INTO THE BIGGEST ROMAN CANDLE ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD.
BOOM!
THE ENTIRE TOP TWENTY FLOORS WERE PULVERISED, KILLING MOST OF THE BUILDING'S SMALL HUMAN STAFF AND DESTROYING VITAL COMPUTER RECORDS.

NEXT DAY, I WAS CALLED TO CAPITOL CITY. WHEN I ARRIVED IT WAS SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE GRAND OPENING OF THE NEW PEACE PLAZA AND THE CAPITOL ARCH.

MY CLIENT WAS SLEY HARSON'S DAUGHTER, LITA.
I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR FATHER, MISS HARSON . . .
DON'T BE, MR KAYN. YOU SEE, I DON'T THINK MY FATHER'S DEAD AT ALL!
W

BUT BOTH HIS PILOT AND A RECEPTIONIST SAW HIM ENTER THE BUILDING. FROM WHAT I HEAR, THEY'VE EVEN SALVAGED A SECURICORDER FROM THE DOORFRAME WHICH POSITIVELY IDENTIFIES SLEY HARSON . . .
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE TO FOOL A SECURICORDER . LET ME TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT . . .

I WAS SITTING IN MY ROOM TRYING TO TAKE IN WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE HOLOVATOR WAS SWITCHED ON AND IT WAS SHOWING SOME STUPID SOAP OPERA.
SUDDENLY THE PICTURE BROKE UP INTO INTERFERENCE, ONLY TO BE REPLACED BY ANOTHER IMAGE.

FATHER! WHAT'S HAPPENING? I . . .
LITA . . . VZZZ . . . LITA, I'M NOT DEAD . . . ZTT . . . I'M . . . NOT DEAD . . . ZMMM . . . CRRRT . . . HELP ME!

IT'S . . . ZZZ MIDAS . . . MIDAS . . . GZZZ . . . MI . . . RRZZTZZZ . . .
THEN HE WAS GONE.

HE'S ALIVE, KAYN. I KNOW IT! AND HE'S IN TROUBLE. YOU MUST FIND HIM!
I DON'T KNOW, MISS HARSON. THERE'S SO LITTLE TO GO ON. HOW DO I . . .

I'LL PAY YOU FIVE THOUSAND A DAY, PLUS EXPENSES AND FREE ACCESS TO MY FAMILY'S PERSONAL FUEL STORE.
FIVE THOUSAND? A DAY? YOU'RE PLAYING MY TUNE, MISS HARSON.
WHAT ABOUT THE NAME 'MIDAS'? WASN'T YOUR FATHER A MEMBER OF A CLUB WITH THAT NAME, OR SOMETHING?
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD ASK LANDON ELLIS ABOUT THAT. THAT'S HIM OVER THERE. HE'S MY FATHER'S PARTNER, AND A FELLOW MEMBER OF THE MIDAS CLUB.
PLEASE FIND MY FATHER, MR KAYN. I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
I'LL DO MY BEST.

I REMEMBERED ELLIS FROM A NEWS STORY THE PREVIOUS YEAR — HE'D GONE MISSING, PRESUMED DEAD, IN DEEP SPACE, BUT WAS LATER FOUND UNHARMED.
EXCUSE ME, MR ELLIS. MY NAME'S KAYN AND I WORK FOR CHANNEL 200 NEWS. I WONDERED IF YOU COULD TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT THE MIDAS CLUB?
I DON'T REALLY HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF TIME, MR KAYN. AND THE MIDAS CLUB IS NOT INTERESTED IN PUBLICITY.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARTNER, THE LATE SLEY HARSON? WASN'T HE A MEMBER?
I HAVE LITTLE TO SAY MR KAYN. I'VE JUST TRAVELLED ALL THE WAY FROM TROY TO STRAIGHTEN OUT HARSON INDUSTRIES' AFFAIRS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THIS TRAGEDY. I'M VERY BUSY.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR ASSISTANCE.
GOODBYE, MR KAYN.

THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT RIDE HOME ON THE INTERLINK AND MAKE MY WAY BACK TO THE OFFICE.
WHY WAS ELLIS SO UNHELPFUL?

DEEP IN THOUGHT, I ARRIVED BACK AT MY OFFICE —
M.R. KAYN
PRIVATE
INVESTIGATOR
COMPUTER! I'M BACK! ANY MESSAGES ON THE . . .
SOME SIXTH SENSE ALERTED ME . . .

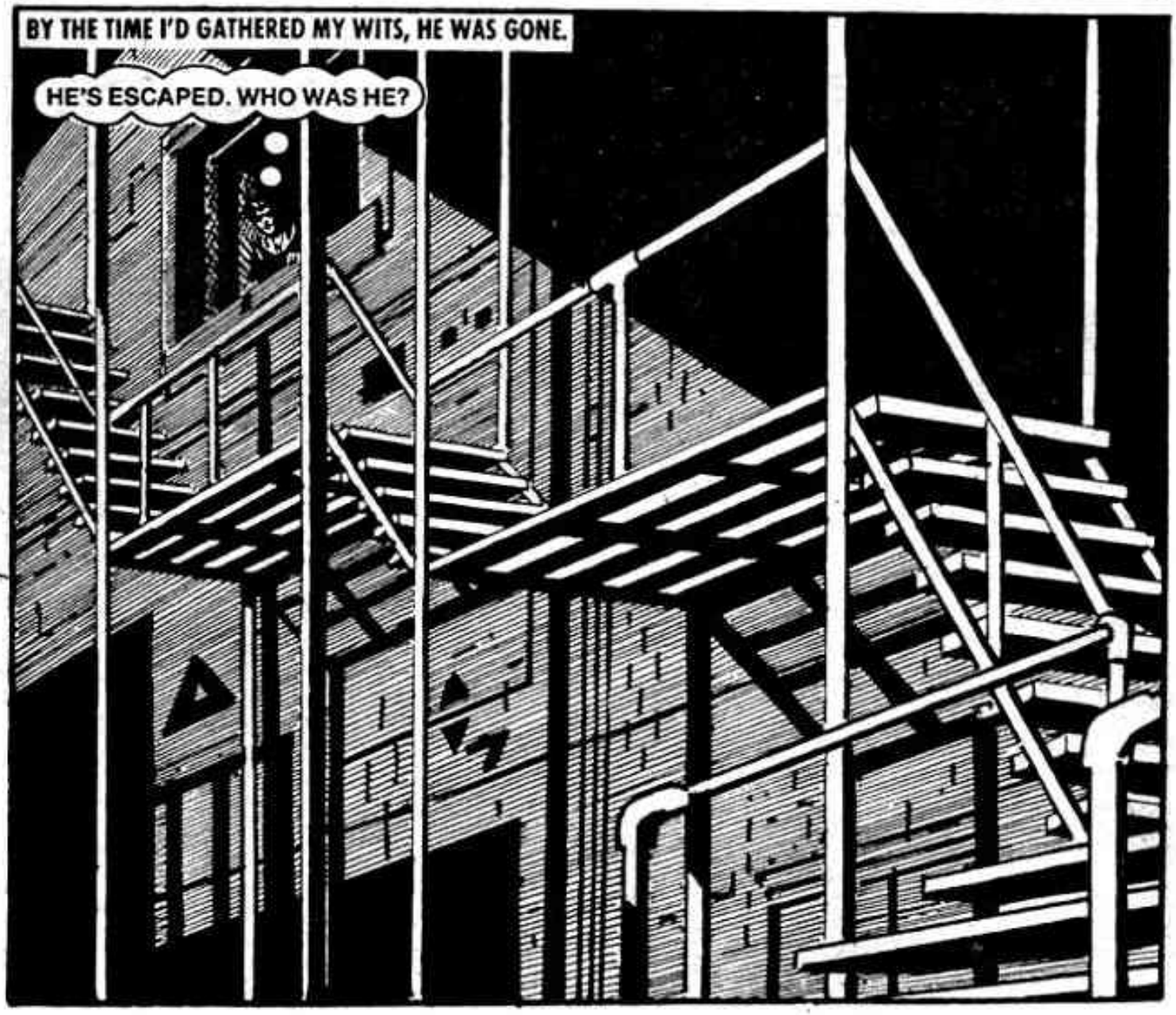
. . . WHICH WAS JUST AS WELL.
FRRZZZT!
I SAY . . .!!!

THERE'S ENOUGH VOLTAGE IN THAT SHOK-STIK TO REDUCE ME TO CHARCOAL.
UNNGH!
AND ENOUGH POWER IN HIS FIST TO LOOSEN A FEW TEETH.
COMPUTER! ACTIVATE HALL SPRINKLERS!
THE ATTACKER DEFINITELY HAD THE UPPER HAND, SO A BIT OF LEVELLING WAS CALLED FOR. HIS SHOK-STICK WAS LYING HANDY.

EVERY CITYBLOCK WAS FITTED WITH SPRINKLERS, IN CASE OF FIRE.
THE COMBINATION OF THE WATER AND A LIVE SHOK-STIK COULD BE DESCRIBED WITH ONE WORD . . .

ELECTRIFYING!!!
A HUGE SURGE OF CURRENT RAN THROUGH MY ATTACKER.

HE'S STILL ALIVE!


BY THE TIME I'D GATHERED MY WITS, HE WAS GONE.
HE'S ESCAPED. WHO WAS HE?

I WAS BEWILDERED! THE COMPUTER SEEMED THE ONLY SOURCE OF HELP.
COMPUTER! AS I WAS SAYING BEFORE THAT INTERRUPTION, WERE THERE ANY MESSAGES WHILE I WAS OUT?
WELL, I'M AFRAID THERE WERE SEVERAL CALLS FROM SARVIK KOHOLT. HE SAYS THAT IF YOU DON'T PAY YOUR RENT BY THE END OF THE WEEK HE'LL PERSONALLY ZAP YOUR . . .
OKAY, OKAY, I GET THE DRIFT.

HE ALSO THREATENED TO HAVE ME SOLD FOR SCRAP.
WELL, HE WOULDN'T GET MUCH! THE SOONER WE GET ON WITH THIS JOB THE SOONER I'LL GET PAID.

COMPUTER! I'M GOING TO TRANSFER YOUR MEMORY TO THE SHIP. SEE IF YOU CAN FIND OUT ANYTHING ABOUT THE MIDAS CLUB. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE TRIP.

IT WAS ONLY A SHORT HOP ACROSS TOWN TO CENTRAL SPACEPORT WHERE THE SHIP WAS WAITING.
HOW ARE WE FOR FUEL, COMPUTER?
FOUR FULL TANKS, STRAIGHT FROM THE PERSONAL SUPPLY OF THE HARSON FAMILY.
WE CLEARED THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE AND HEADED OUT INTO DEEP SPACE.
ANY DATA ON THE MIDAS CLUB, COMPUTER?
QUITE A LOT! BASED ON THE PLANET GORDIUS, THE MIDAS CLUB HAS RESTRICTED MEMBERSHIP. ONLY CREDIT BILLIONAIRES ARE ELIGIBLE TO JOIN. CURRENT MEMBERS INCLUDE MOST OF THE GALAXY'S PROMINENT BUSINESS TYCOONS.

THE CLUB HAS FINANCED THE BUILDING OF THE CAPITAL ARCH AND THE PEACE PLAZA IN CAPITOL CITY. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE FORMALLY OPENED BY SEVERAL OF THE ALLIANCE LEADERS AT A SPECIAL CEREMONY IN TWO DAYS TIME.
THAT MUST BE WHY LANDON ELLIS WAS THERE EARLIER. HOW COME YOU KNOW ALL THIS ANYWAY?

BECAUSE I PAY ATTENTION TO THE NEWSFAX REPORTS, AND YOU DON'T.
YEAH, OK, SMART ALECK. SHUT UP AND PLOT A COURSE TO BABALON.

TRAVELLING IN HYPERSPACE IS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS BORING THAN A CONVERSATION WITH A PROCYON INSURANCE SALESMAN, BUT WITHIN THREE CLIX WE HAD REACHED BABALON, ONE OF THE WILDEST AND MOST DANGEROUS WORLDS IN THE GALAXY.

I HAD COME TO BABALON, AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT, BECAUSE I HAD A FEELING I WOULD BE NEEDING A LITTLE HELP WITH THIS CASE.
KEEP CHECKING ON THE MIDAS CLUB, COMPUTER. I'LL TRY NOT TO BE LONG.

ADDRESSES ARE A BIT APPROXIMATE ON BABALON, AND MY APPROACH WAS NOISY.
STOP, STRANGER . . . OR YOU VAPED!
CRACK!

IT'S ME, CINNIBAR.
SORRY, KAYN, YOU HUMES ALL LOOK THE SAME TO ME.

CINNIBAR WAS THE VERY PERSON I'D COME TO BABALON TO FIND. SHE WAS A FRIEND AND ONE OF THE BEST HUNTERS IN THE GALAXY.
I'VE COME TO ASK FOR YOUR HELP ON A CASE. MY SHIP'S WAITING.
I COME!

BACK ON BOARD SHIP, I EXPLAINED THE SITUTATION TO CINNIBAR.
. . . AND SO NOW I WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT GORDIUS, WHERE THE MIDAS CLUB IS BASED. AFTER THAT ATTACK IN MY OFFICE, I'VE A FEELING I MAY NEED SOMEBODY TO PROTECT MY BACK — AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN TRUST!
SO GRACIOUS.

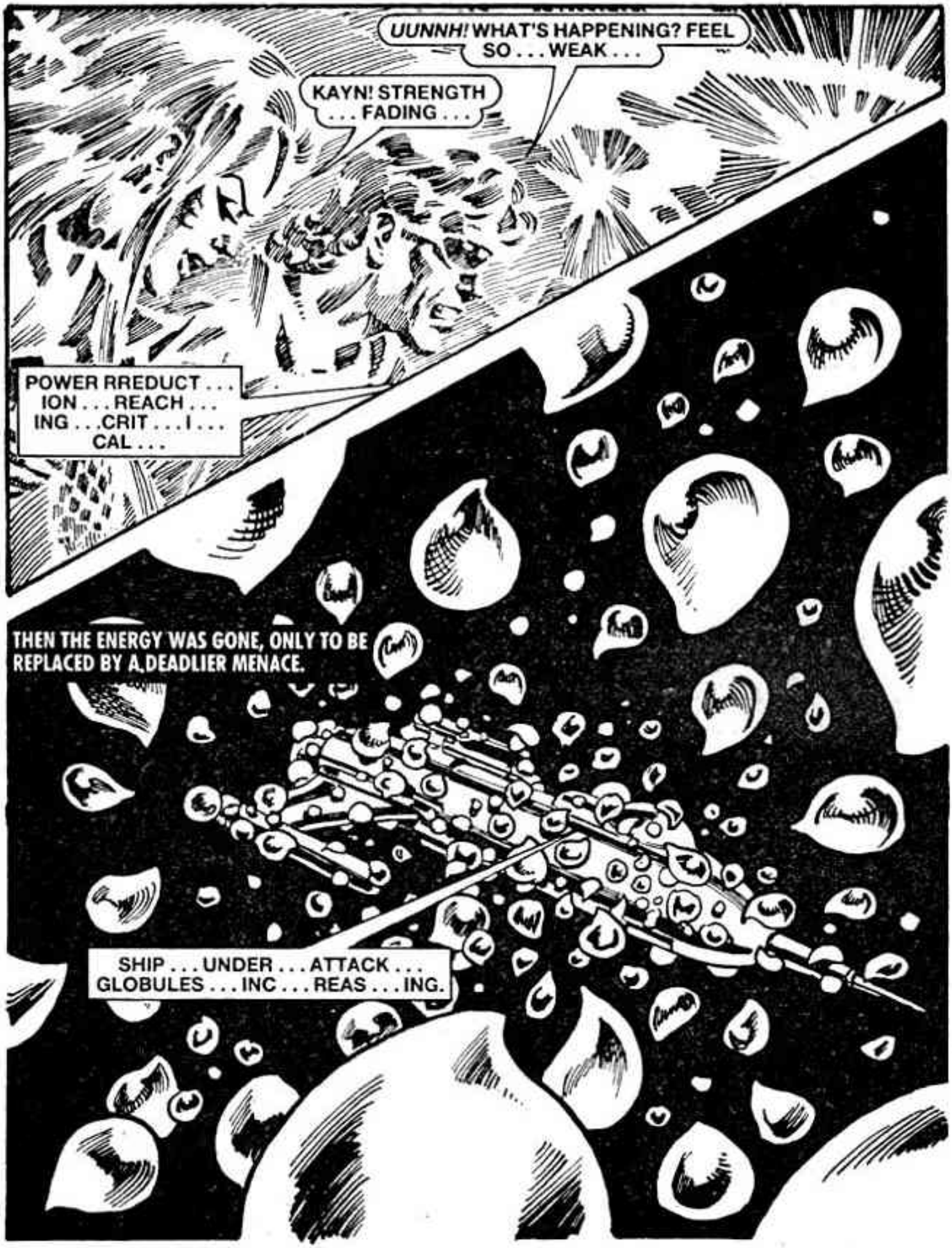
GORDIUS WAS IN THE FRIGIA SYSTEM, A BRIEF JAUNT THROUGH HYPERSPACE.

THAT'S AN EXACT COPY OF THE CAPITOL ARCH ON EARTH.

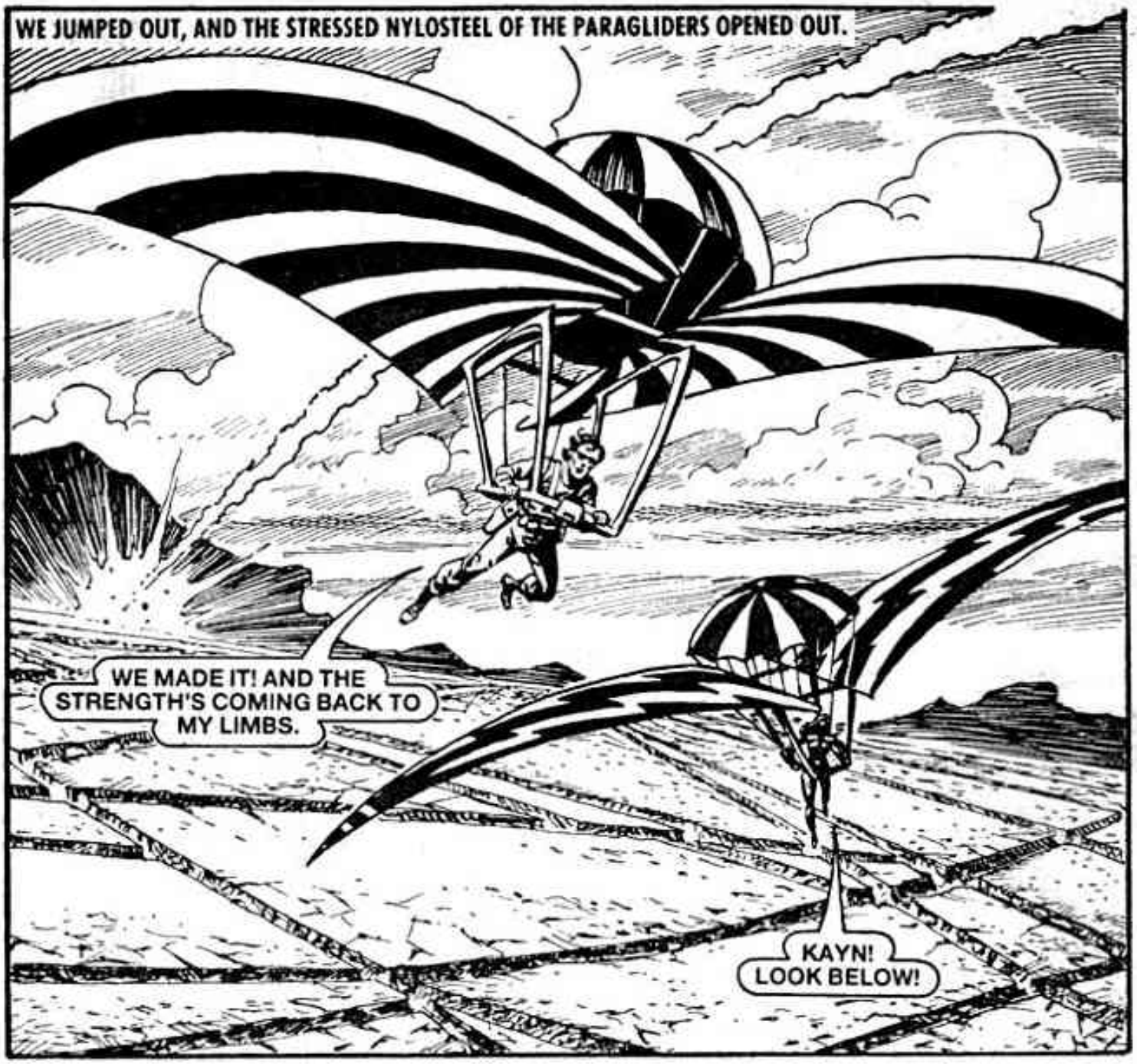
YOU! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CLAIMED TO BE A REPORTER.
TOP OF THE CLASS, ELLIS. I WAS JUST ADMIRING THIS ARCH. IT LOOKS AN AWFUL LOT LIKE THE NEW ONE IN CAPITOL CITY.
OF COURSE IT DOES! WE INTEND TO ERECT THEM ALL OVER THE GALAXY. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I'D LIKE TO JOIN THE MIDAS CLUB — ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.
RIFF-RAFF LIKE YOU, KAYN, WOULDN'T BE ACCEPTABLE. NOW, WARP OUT, OR MY ASSISTANTS WILL ASSIST YOU.
THAT'S NO WAY TO SPEAK TO A LADY . . . SHE'S INSULTED. WE SHALL LEAVE. COME, MY DEAR.

DON'T 'MY DEAR' ME . . . WHY NOT FIGHT?
ELLIS IS PROBABLY WITHIN HIS RIGHTS TO ORDER US AWAY. DON'T WORRY, WE'LL BE BACK.
CINNIBAR WAS STILL SULKING AS WE PREPARED TO BLAST OFF.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN TRACK DOWN A MIDAS CLUB MEMBER. COMPUTER! WHO'S LIKELY TO BE THE NEAREST.
YOU COULD TRY SHARNA LYALL. HER ARMAMENTS EMPIRE OPERATES FROM THE PLANET TYR. THAT'S EIGHT LIGHT YEARS FROM HERE, IN THE HERLA SYSTEM.
IN THE BOREDOM OF HYPERSPACE, MY SLUGGISH BRAIN FINALLY PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.
MMMM! HOW COULD ELLIS HAS FINISHED HIS BUSINESS ON EARTH AND THEN REACHED GORDIUS SO QUICKLY? SOMETHING VERY STRANGE IS GOING ON HERE, CINNIBAR.

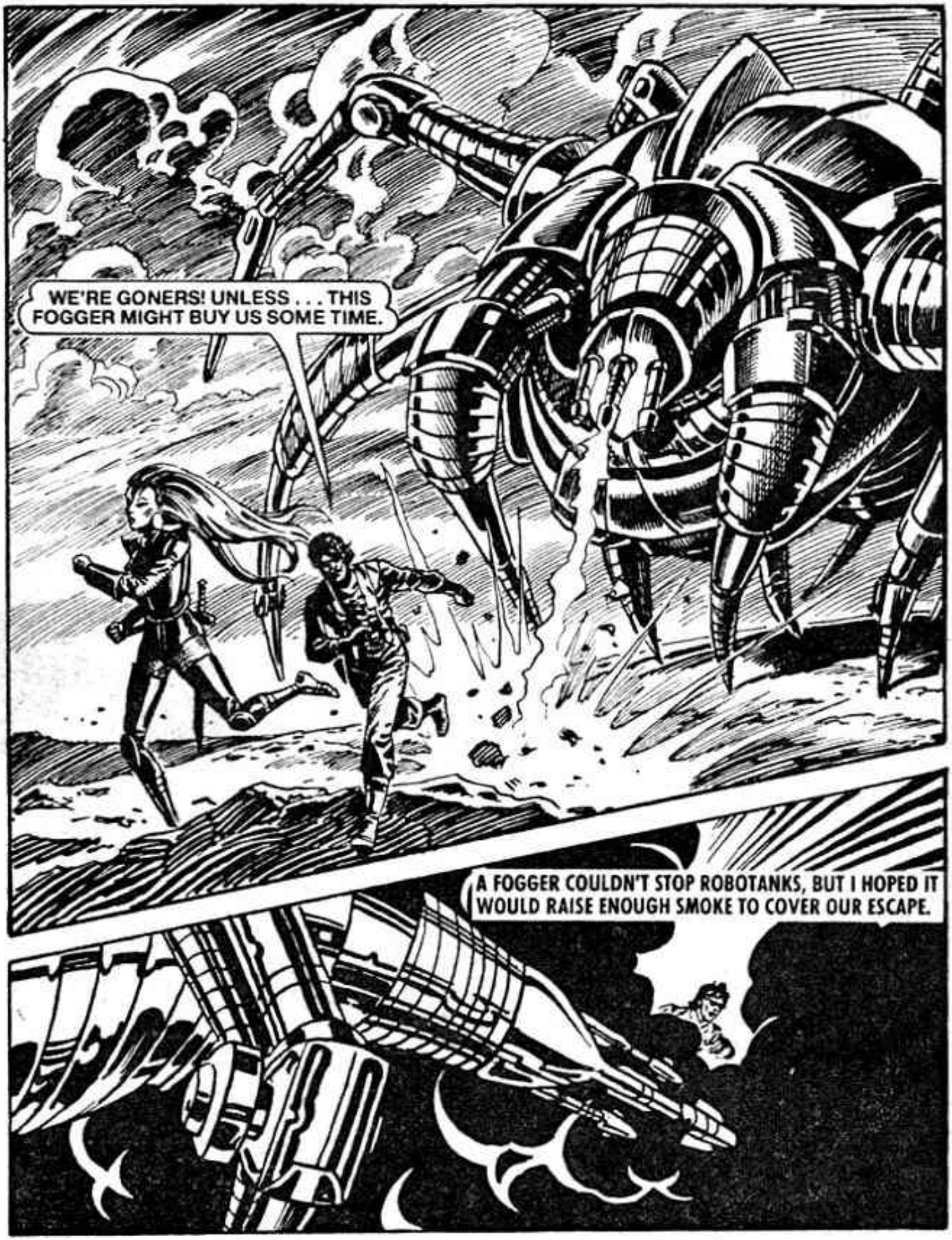
SOON, TYR, CAME INTO VIEW.
THAT'S TYR, DEAD AHEAD. PREPARE TO TAKE US DOWN, COMPUTER.
DESCENT SEQUENCE INITIATED AND . . . KAYN! I'M TRACKING A MASSIVE POWER EMANATION FROM THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET! IT'S CLOSING FAST!
BEFORE THE COMPUTER COULD REACT TWO ENERY FLARES STRUCK THE SHIP LIKE RUNAWAY LIGHTNING.
LOOK OUT!


UUNNH! WHAT'S HAPPENING? FEEL SO . . . WEAK . . .
KAYN! STRENGTH . . . FADING . . .
POWER RREDUCT . . . ION . . . REACH . . . ING . . . CRIT . . . I . . . CAL . . .
THEN THE ENERGY WAS GONE, ONLY TO BE REPLACED BY A DEADLIER MENACE.
SHIP . . . UNDER . . . ATTACK . . . GLOBULES . . . INC . . . REAS . . . ING.

AS THE GLOBULES INCREASED THE SHIP'S WEIGHT, WE BEGAN TO PLUMMET FASTER, DOWN THROUGH TYR'S ATMOSPHERE.
CINNIBAR! THERE'S A PARAGLIDER BY YOUR SEAT. I'VE GOT ONE TOO. WE'VE GOT TO EJECT.
I AM READY!
THE COMPUTER COULDN'T COME, BUT ITS MEMORY COULD.


WE JUMPED OUT, AND THE STRESSED NYLOSTEEL OF THE PARAGLIDERS OPENED OUT.
WE MADE IT! AND THE STRENGTH'S COMING BACK TO MY LIMBS.
KAYN! LOOK BELOW!

EVEN AS WE LANDED—
ROBOTANKS! RUN FOR IT, CINNIBAR!
PAH! DO YOU RUN FROM EVERY FIGHT?


WE'RE GONERS! UNLESS . . . THIS FOGGER MIGHT BUY US SOME TIME.
A FOGGER COULDN'T STOP ROBOTANKS, BUT I HOPED IT WOULD RAISE ENOUGH SMOKE TO COVER OUR ESCAPE.

IT RAISED ENOUGH SMOKE! — TOO MUCH!
CAN'T SEE . . .
STAY PUT! I CAN'T HEAR THE ROBOTANKS AND THIS SHOULD CLEAR UP IN JUST A . . .
. . . MINUTE . . . UH-OH.
WHAT DO WE DO NOW — CHARGE THEM?
IT LOOKED LIKE THE BIG SLEEP FOR US . . . I HAD RUN RIGHT OUT OF IDEAS.

EVEN AN AIRSHIP JOINED IN THE FUN—
THOSE ROBOTANKS APPEAR TO BE ATTACKING SOMETHING. IT LOOKS LIKE TWO HUMANS! STOP THE DISPLAY!
THOSE AREN'T HUMANS, JUST CONSTRUCTS. TEST DUMMIES.
THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE CONSTRUCTS TO ME, MIZZ! STOP THE DISPLAY!

THE AIRSHIP LANDED.
WHAT IN THE GALAXY ARE YOU DOING HERE? THIS IS A WEAPONS TESTING ZONE. YOU COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!
YOU DON'T SAY! WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHY WE WERE SHOT DOWN!

SHOT DOWN? WELL, AT LEAST THAT PROVES THE ENERGY SIPHON AND THE GRAVULES WORK AS EXPECTED. I'LL TAKE A CONSIGNMENT OF EACH, MIZZ LYALL.
LISTEN! IF YOU DON'T MIND THE GUINEA PIG GETTING A WORD IN, WHAT ABOUT OUR SHIP?

I'M SHARNA LYALL AND I'M WILLING TO REPLACE YOUR SHIP AS ITS DEMISE CLINCHED AN ORDER.
SO YOU'RE THE FAMOUS MIZZ LYALL. WE HAVE . . . HAD A MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE — SLEY HARSON.

SLEY'S DEATH WAS TRAGIC! NOW, IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME TO RETURN TO MY CLIENTS. TIME IS MONEY AND THE DISPLAY MUST CONTINUE.

I BELIEVE YOU WERE MEMBERS OF THE SAME CLUB . . .
ENOUGH CHIT-CHAT . . . DO YOU WANT A REPLACEMENT SHIP OR NOT?
NEVER LOOK A GIFT SHIP IN THE MOUTH IS MY MOTTO. BUT A NAGGING FEELING IRRITATED ME . . . LYALL WAS VERY ANXIOUS TO GET RID OF US. WE WENT OVER THE RECENT EVENTS.
THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT, CINNIBAR. IF THOSE GENERALS HADN'T SEEN US, LYALL WOULD HAVE JUST LET THE ROBOTANKS FINISH US OFF.
I SENSED SOMETHING WRONG IN HER. EMPTINESS . . . I CANNOT DESCRIBE.

MMM! I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. IT'S AS THOUGH A BLANK WALL CAME DOWN WHEN I MENTIONED HARSON AND THE CLUB.
I PLUGGED THE COMPUTER'S MEMORY MODULE INTO THE NEW SHIP'S CONTROL SYSTEM AND WE WERE OFF.

NEXT VISIT WAS TO THE PLANET GALATEA, WHERE ANOTHER MIDAS CLUB MEMBER, QUIN TERRILL'S ROBOMEX CORPORATION WAS BASED.
ROBOMEX COMPLEX BELOW, KAYN. WE HAVE COMPUTER CLEARANCE FOR TOUCHDOWN.
A WELCOME AT LAST! TAKE US DOWN, COMPUTER!

BUT THE WELCOME WAS ANYTHING BUT WARM — IT WAS NON-EXISTENT.
ROBOMEX ARE THE GALAXY'S BIGGEST MANUFACTURERS OF ROBOTS AND CYBERNETIC SYSTEMS. THEY ALSO HAVE AN ALMOST COMPLETELY AUTOMATED COMPLEX.
IT IS TOO QUIET!

IT SHOULDN'T BE AS QUIET AS THIS. SOMETHING'S WRONG.

BUT THE QUIET DIDN'T LAST FOR LONG — AS WE WALKED INTO AN AMBUSH.

DEFEND YOURSELF, KAYN!

WAR-MEKS! RUN FOR IT.

NO! TOO MANY QUESTIONS REMAIN UNANSWERED. THIS TIME, CINNIBAR FIGHTS!

WITH ONE LEAP, CINNIBAR SUDDENLY REMINDED ME WHY I'D BROUGHT HER ON THIS CASE — THE HUNTERS OF BABLON HAD DEVELOPED TECHNIQUES FOR KILLING JUST ABOUT ANYTHING THAT MOVED.

KAYN! YOU FIND TERRILL! I FIGHT ROBOTS!

I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE AGAINST THEM.

GO . . . I AM NO PUNY EARTH WOMAN.

SHE WAS RIGHT. CINNIBAR COULD TAKE CARE OF HERSELF. I SHOULD HAVE HAD MORE SYMPATHY FOR THOSE POOR WAR-MEKS — ALONE AGAINST HER!

IT WOULD HELP IF I KNEW WHERE TERRILL WAS. I'LL TRY THAT CORRIDOR AHEAD.

UH-OH, BAD MOVE. I'VE A FEELING WE'VE BEEN SET UP.

THIS WAY OUT!

I DODGED INTO A CHAMBER CONTAINING THOUSANDS OF ROBOTS . . . ALL GOLD.
BY THE PLANETS!!

THESE ROBOTS SEEM STRANGELY FAMILIAR. THIS IS WHAT I FOUGHT IN MY OFFICE! I'M SURE OF IT. STRANGE, THEY SEEM TO BE OF HIGHLY ADVANCED DESIGN — BEYOND HUMAN TECHNOLOGY . . .
HELLO, TERRILL!
I SEE YOU'VE MET THE CYDROIDS, KAYN.
THEY ARE A NEW GENERATION — BIOROBOTS, CREATED BY THE SCIENCE OF MY ALIEN MASTERS TO HELP CONQUER EARTH!

DIE, KAYN!
ER . . . NO THANKS . . .
TERRILL'S BLAST HAD PROVIDED ME WITH A WEAPON — A SPLINTER OF METAL.
I DON'T THINK I'LL TAKE UP YOUR OFFER!
SSKRAAAWK!

A ROBOT . . . WHAT THE . . .???
IT'S T-T-TOO LATE . . . T-T-TOO . . . LATE . . . LATE EARTH IS DOOMED . . . D-D-DOOMED . . . IS DOOMED . . .
IF HE'S A ROBOT, WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MIDAS CLUB?
A SIMPLE MISSING PERSONS CASE WAS TURNING INTO SOMETHING A LOT MORE COMPLEX AND MORE DANGEROUS.

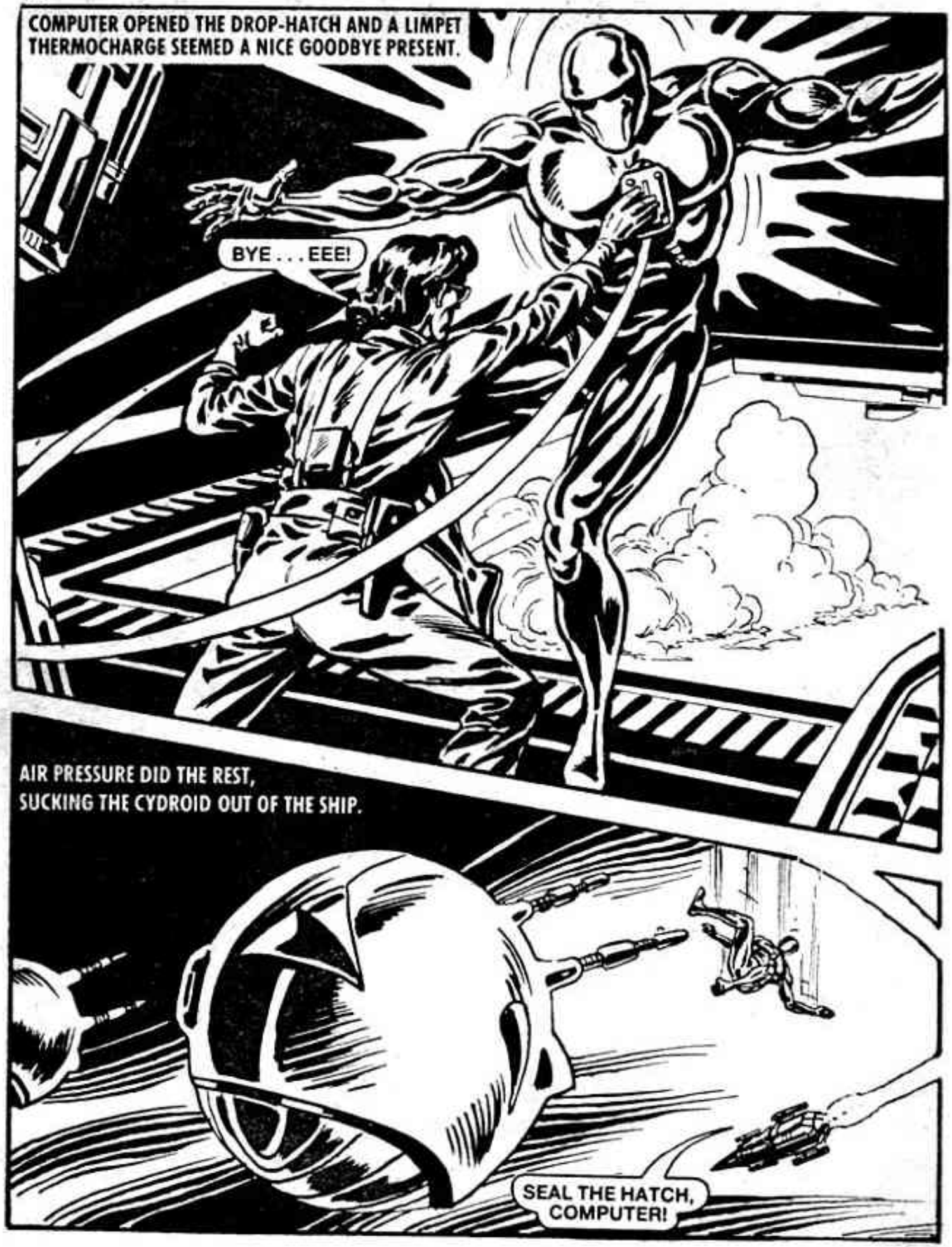
I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO CINNIBAR. I HOPE SHE'S . . .

. . . ALL RIGHT!
NORE MORE ROBOTS TO FIGHT?

CINNIBAR WAS ALL FOR STAYING, BUT WHEN I TOLD HER WHAT I'D FOUND OUT, SHE RELENTED.
THE 'SLEY HARSON' WHO DESTROYED HIS BUILDING ON EARTH MUST HAVE BEEN A ROBOT. SO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE MIDAS CLUB MUST BE ALIVE.

WE GOT AWAY JUST IN TIME—
TWO ROBOSHIP HARRIERS IN PURSUIT! 200 METRES AND CLOSING!
BOOM!

EVASIVE ACTION, COMPUTER!
KAYN!
IT WAS A CYDROID! SOMEHOW IT HAD SNEAKED ABOARD.
COMPUTER! OPEN THE DROP-HATCH! QUICKLY!


COMPUTER OPENED THE DROP-HATCH AND A LIMPET THERMOCHARGE SEEMED A NICE GOODBYE PRESENT.
BYE . . . EEE!
AIR PRESSURE DID THE REST, SUCKING THE CYDROID OUT OF THE SHIP.
SEAL THE HATCH, COMPUTER!

THE CYRDROID EXPLODED, TAKING THE ROBOSHIPS WITH IT.

CINNIBAR MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE AGGRESSIVE, BUT SHE WAS NO DUMB BLONDE—
IF THE MIDAS CLUB HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY ROBOTS, HARSON'S FUEL INDUSTRY HAS ALREADY BEEN CRIPPLED. SABOTAGE IN ARMAMENTS, ROBOTICS AND OTHER VITAL INDUSTRIES WILL LEAVE THE ALLIANCE DEFENCES SO BADLY WEAKENED THAT THEY'LL STAND NO CHANCE IN AN ATTACK!
YES! BUT THE TERRILL ROBOT SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HIS 'ALIEN MASTERS'. WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM! WE'RE NOT FAR FROM TROY. WE CAN CONTACT EARTH FROM THERE AND . . . WAIT A MINUTE! TROY! THAT'S IT!

IN A FLASH EVERYTHING BECAME CLEAR.
TROY? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
THE PLANET TROY WAS NAMED AFTER AN ANCIENT EARTH CITY, CINNIBAR. THE PEOPLE OF THAT CITY WERE GIVEN THE GIFT OF A GIANT WOODEN HORSE BY THEIR ENEMIES. WHAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT THE TROJAN HORSE WAS A TRICK. IT WAS HOLLOW — FULL OF ENEMY SOLDIERS WHO WERE ABLE TO ATTACK THE CITY FROM WITHIN! COMPUTER! FORGET TROY AND GET US BACK TO GORDIUS, FAST!

THE JOURNEY SEEMED TO LAST FOREVER, BUT GORDIUS CAME IN SIGHT, AND WITH IT, ALL MY WORST SUSPICIONS WERE CONFIRMED.
ALIEN SHIPS! A WHOLE FLEET OF THEM!
WE FIGHT THEM!
CINNIBAR WAS NO DUMB BLONDE BUT SOMETIMES HER URGE TO FIGHT EVERYTHING ANNOYED ME. I IGNORED HER.

BY THE TIME WE LANDED —
AND THERE'S OUR RECEPTION COMMITTEE. STAY OUT OF SIGHT CINNIBAR, AND REMEMBER OUR PLAN.

AND SO . . .
DON'T SHOOT!
YOU WERE A FOOL TO RETURN, KAYN. WE TRIED TO DISSUADE YOU, YOU DON'T REALLY THINK YOU CAN STOP US, DO YOU? WHERE'S THE ALIEN BITCH?

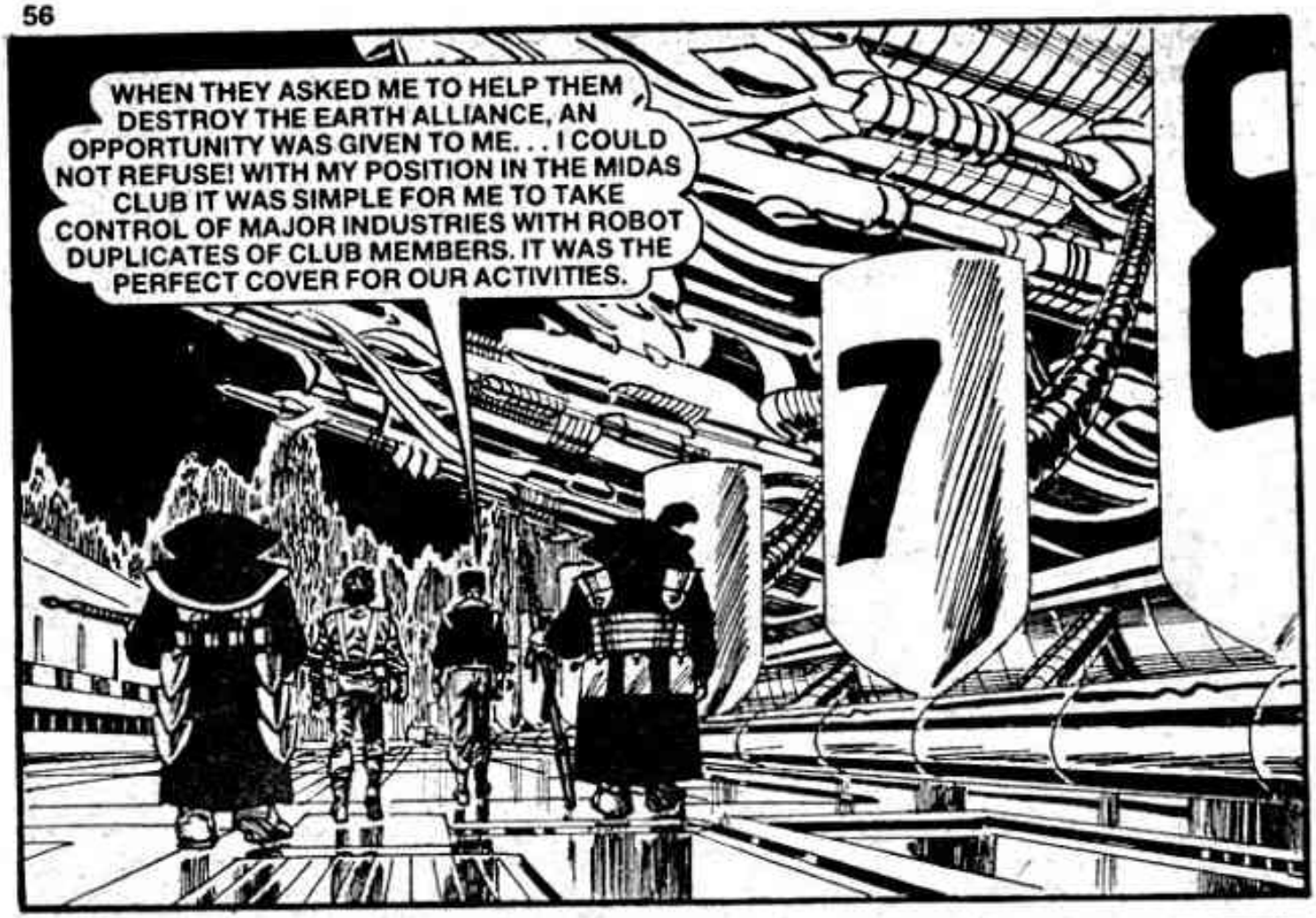
SHE CAME UP AGAINST DOZENS OF ROBOTS ON GALATEA — WHAT CHANCE D'YOU THINK SHE HAD?
NOT A LOT! BUT CHECK THE SHIP IN CASE.

THERE'S NOBODY HERE!
AND THERE WASN'T! CINNIBAR WAS HIDING IN A FUEL POD.

THE CAPITOL ARCH IS A MATTER RECEIVER! THAT'S WHY YOU WERE ABLE TO GET HERE SO QUICKLY FROM EARTH. TRUE?
VERY CLEVER, KAYN. AND OF COURSE, OUR DUPLICATE ARCH IS THE TRANSMITTER.
THROUGH IT WE CAN BEAM A WHOLE FLEET OF SHIPS TO EARTH DIRECTLY AND WITHOUT DETECTION. WHEN THE ALLIANCE LEADERS GATHER SHORTLY FOR THE OPENING OF THE PEACE PLAZA, WE WILL STRIKE.
BUT WHY, ELLIS?

I'LL TELL YOU WHY, KAYN, SINCE YOU'RE GOING TO DIE ANYWAY. LAST YEAR, WHEN I WENT MISSING, I WAS INVOLVED IN A WARP ACCIDENT ON THE EDGE OF THE GALAXY. MY BODY WAS BURNED AND TWISTED TERRIBLY.

I WOULD HAVE DIED BUT FOR THE KLIPHOTH, AN ALIEN RACE WHO PICKED ME UP OUT OF THE WRECKAGE. THEIR ROBOTICS TECHNOLOGY IS FAR SUPERIOR TO OUR OWN AND IT WAS EASY FOR THEM TO REPAIR MY BODY WITH CYBORG PARTS.


WHEN THEY ASKED ME TO HELP THEM DESTROY THE EARTH ALLIANCE, AN OPPORTUNITY WAS GIVEN TO ME. . . I COULD NOT REFUSE! WITH MY POSITION IN THE MIDAS CLUB IT WAS SIMPLE FOR ME TO TAKE CONTROL OF MAJOR INDUSTRIES WITH ROBOT DUPLICATES OF CLUB MEMBERS. IT WAS THE PERFECT COVER FOR OUR ACTIVITIES.
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AND THEN WE BUILT THE CAPITOL ARCH AND THE PEACE PLAZA — OUR DEADLY GIFT TO EARTH. WHILE THE ALLIANCE IS AT ITS WEAKEST, THE KLIPHOTH AND OUR UNBEATABLE CYRDROIDS WILL ATTACK.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE REAL MIDAS CLUB MEMBERS?

THEY'RE IN HERE. AFTER HARSON TRIED TO CONTACT HIS DAUGHTER, WE WERE FORCED TO RESTRAIN THEM, BUT THEY'VE BEEN KEPT ALIVE TO WITNESS THE DOWNFALL OF THE ALLIANCE.
YOU'RE ALL HEART, ELLIS. EVEN IF IT IS ARTIFICIAL.

I WAS INTRODUCED TO THE KLIPHOTH LEADER.
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, ELLIS. OUR BATTLECRUISERS ARE ON STANDBY. SOON THE EARTH SHALL BE OURS AND THEN THE ALLIANCE IS BROKEN!
KAYN, BOW DOWN BEFORE THE CONQEROR OF EARTH — LORD GROLL OF THE KLIPHOTH!

CAN'T SAY IT'S A PLEASURE, GROLL. MAYBE I SHOULD INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF MINE . . .
CINNIBAR WAS TO HAVE FOLLOWED ME, AND I PRAYED SHE HAD.

I NEEDN'T HAVE WORRIED.
CINNIBAR OF BABALON!
AIEEE!

GROLL'S GETTING AWAY! HE'LL ORDER HIS SHIPS TO ATTACK!

CINNIBAR! GET THE PRISONERS OUT OF HERE! I'LL TRY TO STOP THE FLEET.
THAT'S RIGHT. . . LEAVE ME TO BE BABYSITTER!
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO.

THEN AN IDEA STRUCK ME —
FORGET IT, KAYN! YOU'LL DO NOTHING OR HARSON DIES.
GET THE OTHERS THROUGH THE ARCH, CINNIBAR!

CINNIBAR MADE FOR THE ARCH. IT WAS ALREADY ENERGISING AS GROLL AND HIS FLEET MADE READY TO GO THROUGH.

HURRY!
AS THEY ENTERED THE ARCH, THEIR ATOMS WERE BROKEN DOWN AND BEAMED TO EARTH.
MEANWHILE, I HAD MY OWN PROBLEMS.
DROP YOUR BLASTER, KAYN. IT'S ALL OVER.
THESE POWER CABLES OVER HIS HEAD. IT MIGHT WORK.

MY AIM ISN'T THAT GOOD, SO I USED A WIDE BEAM BLAST.
HARSON, MOVE IT!
ONE SHOT SEVERED THE CABLES. IN CONTACT WITH ELLIS' CYBORG BODY THEY WERE LETHAL.
POOR ELLIS! HIS ACCIDENT TWISTED HIS MIND AS WELL AS HIS BODY.

LOOK OUT! THE KLIPHOTH SHIPS ARE FIRING AT US!
AND THEY'RE READY TO GO THROUGH! LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MATTER TRANSMISSION, BUT I HAVE AN IDEA.
I QUICKLY EXPLAINED MY IDEA.
IT MIGHT WORK! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE NOW!

WE LEAPT THROUGH THE ARCH AND WERE INSTANTLY TRANSPORTED TO EARTH.
WE MADE IT!
NOT YET! I'LL NEED SOME HELP.

QUIN TERRILL CAME TO MY AID.
THERE'S ONLY SECONDS LEFT!
THAT SHOULD DO IT, I HOPE.

THERE WAS NO TIME FOR A SECOND CHANCE AS THE FIRST KLIPHOTH SHIP WAS BEAMED THROUGH.

WE'RE DOOMED!

AND THEN . . .

IT'S WORKING! WE'VE ALTERED THE MATTER RECEIVER SO THAT IT'S COMPRESSING THE ATOMS OF THE KLIPHOTH AS THEY REASSEMBLE. THEY'RE SO SMALL, EVEN BLASTERS DESTROY THEM!

AND SO BEGAN THE STRANGEST BATTLE IN EARTH'S HISTORY — ALL IT TOOK WAS A FEW PEOPLE WITH HAND WEAPONS TO PUT PAID TO THE CAREFULLY PLANNED INVASION OF THE KLIPHOTH.

WITHIN MOMENTS WE'D REDUCED THE ENTIRE KLIPHOTH FLEET TO SCRAP, AND THE MENACE WAS OVER.

OH, FATHER, YOU'RE SAFE!

THANKS TO KAYN, WE'RE ALL SAFE.

ER... AHUM... LET'S SPLIT, CINNIBAR.

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